

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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TO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC 498

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO JA

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, JA

SUBJ: HOUSE OF COUNCILLORS BY-ELECTION IN KAGOSHIMA

ELECTION HELD SEPTEMBER 21 FOR SEAT WHICH BECAME VACANT ON DEATH OF CONSERVATIVE YOSHIFUM SHIBATATE IN AUGUST. CONSERVATIVE SOJI SATA WON HANDILY IN CONTEST MARKED BY VOTER APATHY. TURNOUT WAS 52.85 PERCENT, THE SECOND-LOWEST SINCE THE WAR. SATA GOT 390,303 VOTES TO 195,201 FOR JSP CANDIDATE KATSUMI IMAMURA, AND 40,162 FOR JCP CANDIDATE KOICHIRO NAKAMA.

EVEN THOUGH ALL PARTIES HAD CLAIMED ELECTION WOULD BE BELLWETHER FOR LOWER HOUSE ELECTION AND WORKED HARD TO TURN OUT VOTE BY IMPORTING TOP OFFICIALS FROM TOKYO, THIS WAS OBVIOUS FAILURE.

PAGE TWO RUADLTA6016 C O N F I D E N T I A L

THERE WAS NEVER ANY SERIOUS TALK ABOUT COOPERATION BETWEEN JSP AND JCP, WHO ARE STILL AT ODDS OVER DEFEAT OF JSP MAYOR OF KAGOSHIMA CITY IN APRIL. LOCAL FARMERS HAD REPORTEDLY BEEN READIER THAN IN PAST ELECTION TO DESERT LDP, AND LOCAL SOURCES REPORTED GENERAL FEELINGS AMONG FARMERS OF DISILLUSIONMENT WITH ALL POLITICIANS AND THEIR PROMISES.

COMMENT: WE DO NOT SEE ELECTION AS HAVING MORE THAN MILD SIGNIFICANCE. OF COURSE, HAD JSP CANDIDATE WON, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN SURPRISING INDEED, BUT MARGIN OF SATA'S VICTORY INDICATES THAT RURAL COMMUNITY IN THIS AGRICULTURAL PREFECTURE STILL FEELS THE LDP BEST SERVES THEIR INTERESTS.

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RICHARDSON

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